

invented and used by my brother-in-law, Mr. Philip E. Brodt, now a student in Columbia College, when he was about five years of age and living in Dansville, N. Y. While several of the ordinary forms of secret language were known to the children of that town, this language, so far as is known, was a pure invention of Philip, devised probably for his own amusement. No one spoke it but himself, though other members of the family learned to understand it. The boy spoke ordinary English like the other children, and when five years old he spoke fluently this language in addition, when it pleased him to do so. Mr. Brodt still remembers the language, and has kindly transcribed in English and his own language some verses which he was in the habit of repeating at that time.

Hillie wad pa urpmle onkey
Climbup ing ye allsto wick;
Sen he whucked pe thaint aff oll
Mit ade dim heathsi lyck.
En whin dys hiing clour he hasped
Me thonkey in hand his
Band ade warefell wo tearth frand iends
Wand ent tino ba ettler and.
Mo nore she'll hoot lis hittsle ister
Ith whis guden woon,
Mo nore pe'll hull ke thittty's ail
Mand ake yer howl fun for.
Ke thittty's ail stow nands strup aight
Ge thun lis aid saide,
Me thonky cdoes not dimb mo such
Lince sittle Dillwie ied.

Willie had a purple monkey
Climbing up a yellow stick;
When he sucked the paint all off
It made him deathly sick.
When in his dying hour he clasped
The monkey in his hand
And bade farewell to earth and friends
And went into a better land.
No more he'll shoot his little sister
With his wooden gun,
No more he'll pull the kitty's tail
And make her yowl for fun.
The kitty's tail now stands up straight,
The gun is laid aside,
The monkey does not climb so much
Since little Willie died.

While the verses have the appearance and sound of gibberish, it will be seen that the modified words are formed from those in the original by simple transpositions of the consonantal sounds beginning adjoining words or syllables, and sometimes of similar vowel or syllabic interchange, with a few minor modifications apparently for euphony.
New York.

H. L. TAYLOR.

Habits of Gray Squirrels.

I WAS much interested in reading the article by Ray Greene Huling in *Science* of Dec. 1 because it gives positive testimony to what I have always believed in regard to the habit of parent gray squirrels taking their young to places of safety. Some years ago I and my companions had a mania for raising young gray squirrels. In our hunts in the woods we found that not more than one good nest out of five contained any young, and that if we did not secure the young when first found they were always gone when we came again. We explained the great numbers of empty nests by saying that they were to put the young in when the home nest was discovered.

I have raised several young gray squirrels. They were taken from the nest when they were still blind and their

tails had not yet become bushy. I fed them with milk by means of a glass pipette, holding one end in my mouth to regulate the flow. I found this apparatus much more satisfactory than spoons or bottles with perforated corks and quills.

The habits of one of my pets in particular were instructive. This squirrel was taken from the nest in the fall, and after having learned to eat solid food was allowed to run at large in the house most of the time during the winter, often being carried for hours in the pockets of some member of the family. In the spring when the doors and windows were open the squirrel was allowed to run about the place. In the course of a month or so he had built *six* different nests in as many different trees and vines around the place—one in the honeysuckle on the front piazza, one in the Virginia creeper that covers one side of the house, and the others in the spruce trees on the lawn. During all this time he was tame enough to be coaxed into the hands by the offer of nuts, etc. As the weather grew warmer our pet became quite a nuisance from his habit of carrying off handkerchiefs and lawn neckties with which to line his numerous houses, and from his making a store-house of the bedroom next his nest, on one occasion actually storing a lot of nuts between the sheets of the bed.

For two or three days we noticed that our pet was making a very peculiar noise, something like a scold, but yet not a scold, and that at the same time he (or she) seemed very restless.

At the end of that time he disappeared, and as our neighbors, who lived near a grove about half a mile from us, reported seeing a squirrel which came close to them to be fed, we had no doubt it was ours, which had gone to the grove in search of a mate.

In robbing the nest of the gray squirrel I do not remember to have seen the old squirrels in or near the nest when I had climbed up to it. My experience with the flying squirrel was different. I frightened an old flying squirrel from her nest and while feeling in the nest for the young, the old one actually came back to the nest, and on my climbing away from the nest she entered. This was repeated three times. I finally put the nest in my soft felt hat, and when the mother went in I closed it up and took her and the three young ones to my house. The young were afterward drowned by the upsetting of a cup of water in their cage, but not until after the mother had nursed them for three days in their captivity. I afterward got three more young flying squirrels and raised them on milk. When grown they were very tame and affectionate, but were not as lively and playful as the young grays.

D. T. MARSHALL.

Metuchen, N. J., Dec. 14, 1893.

Sassafras Trees.

I WAS much interested and rather amused by a letter in *Science*, Jan. 5, from W. J. Quick, on the sassafras, in which he says that "it almost attains the dignity of a tree in size."

I should like him to see some specimens on Long Island, although they are, as well as all large trees, fast disappearing so near New York.

When I first came here, in the woods were sassafras trees that held their own for size with the oaks and hickory; although the trunks were not quite so large their heads were held well up with their more pretentious neighbors. I have taken the logs to mill and had them sawed for lumber and used it for many purposes and was greatly pleased with it in places where strength and lightness were desirable. I call to mind a set of sassafras hay shelvings